

Extra Info
3/14/05

WHAT YOUR 71 CENTS BUYS

Free access to the Acton Memorial Library facilities and materials

The FY04 Town budget provided \$37.04 per resident for the Library or 71 cents per week/per resident. These 71 cents provided the following:

Free books and materials

The average borrower checks out 32 books or other materials per year. The average cost of a hardcover book is \$20. For the 32 books checked out, the borrower saves at least \$640 – plus having more storage room at home. The shelf-life of a popular or children's book averages five years, which allows 125 residents to borrow the book for the retail price of one book.

Free access to professional assistance in searching for information

Our adult and children's reference librarians provided almost 18,000 responses to requests for help in FY04, or approximately 400 per week.

Free access to the Minuteman Library Network resources

Via the Minuteman Library Network, the library provides access to 41 libraries containing over six million items, including out-of-print books. In FY04, the Library processed over 43,000 inter-library loans.

Free access to a wide variety of newspapers and magazines

The Library maintains subscriptions to over 255 newspapers and magazines.

Free access to a wide variety of DVDs, CDs, videos, books on tape

In addition to the 10,000 items in the Library, an even larger variety of titles are available through inter-library loan.

Free assistance in computer and Minuteman Network operations

The Library provides opportunities for one-on-one instruction on conducting Internet searches and use of databases.

Free cultural performances, art exhibits, book discussions

The Library holds twice-yearly poetry readings given by nationally recognized poets. Each month offers a new art exhibit, accompanied by a reception for the artist. One of the book discussion groups has been in existence for nearly twenty years.

Free children's programs and school student assistance

In FY04, over 212 children's programs were offered, with almost 4,000 patrons in attendance. Over 600 children participated in the summer reading program. The Library offers child-friendly databases designed with homework assignments and children's interests in mind. Tours are given to all fifth and six grade classes; fourth grade classes are visited for book talks and use of the library. Materials are set aside for homework assignments on request; reading lists on frequent assignment topics are developed.

Free access to special collections

The new Chinese collection is well used. The total circulation for all items in the collection was 13,906 – an increased circulation of 9,000 items during FY04. In addition, the Library maintains collections of special genealogy records, local Town records, local history information, including records of the Concord Enterprise, and a collection of civil war archives.

Free meeting rooms

The Library provides space for a variety of community and town government meetings at no charge. In FY04, 540 such meetings were held, representing a considerable saving to the organizations involved.

Free study rooms

In FY04, the study rooms were used for a variety of purposes, including literacy tutoring in English, volunteer-provided senior citizen's tax preparations, and a variety of quiet study sessions.

Free computer access

The Library offers computers with access to the Internet, catalog, databases and word processing. One computer can be set up with on-screen Large Print one with a trac-ball, (easier for arthritic users), and one that supports CD-ROM disks. For patrons using their personal computers, the Library offers wireless access, accommodating a large number of users.

Summary *The library circulated 477,138 items in 2004, up 14.6% from the previous year; 230,373 people entered the Library, an increase of 8.3% from 2003. The Library's circulation per full time employee – a measure of workload/productivity – was 26,116 in 2004. This was the highest in Massachusetts in the 123 communities with populations greater than 15,000.*

Over three-fourths of Acton's citizens are registered library patrons. The Acton Memorial Library's use has been increasing by 11.4% percent each year over the past three years.

Information assembled by The Acton Memorial Library Board of Trustees

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